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To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/2/02 5:56pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

It is imperative that the settlement of this case be one that actually benefits consumers. We have lived for so long with Microsoft piously describing everything that benefits them as good for all of us, everything that damages them as bad for us that many many people seem to equate Microsoft's success with America's. But they are not the same. I have heard many people say no one was harmed by Microsoft's anti-trust actions, and today's computers are wonderful, and many other glowing pro-MS comments. But how can we measure what might have been, but is not? How can we know what has never seen the light of day because one company has effectively squelched all competitors?

Well, we can know a little, or at least imagine and extrapolate. I am a user of WordPerfect. Have been and will continue to be until the company is finally and completely crushed by Microsoft. It is, in my opinion, a far more innovative, more useful, and more intelligently designed product. It has many loyal users, who revere its flexibility and its "Reveal Codes". I suspect there are currently other products like it all over, which can barely see the light of day because no one will use them, or other products that did once exist but do no more as they could not get out of Microsoft's illegal wrestling hold. It is impossible to know what history would have been like without the competition-strangling behaviors of Microsoft. But I can't help but believe we have lost a lot of innovation, a lot of unusual ideas, a lot of surprises. WordPerfect, a superior product, has been crushed by Microsoft's illegal behavior. But there is another issue as well....I have few WordPerfect resources available to me, e.g. training, user guides, etc. There is no market. I'd like more info, more tools, more options, but if I choose to use an alternate product, I'm on my own.

AT&T was a monopoly, the owner of the finest phone system in the world. The monopoly withered, and there are hundreds of new products, prices unimaginable in 1983, and services AT&T would never have needed to offer. They are the perfect example of why monopolies--even apparently "good" ones--are not allowed. No one knew about the many products developed since divestiture, but who is sorry that AT&T was broken up? Not a single consumer...though they may pine for the easy days of one phone bill, they all love the cheaper rates and better services, the multiple choices, the array of options.

I write HTML for a living, and think about good pages that download quickly. I have seen a few lines of text and a few small images turned into a thirty MB HTML page by Microsoft Word. 30 MB that must be stored on some server, shipped through the Internet, downloaded across a phone line and opened in my browser. But as Word is the standard HTML

writing tool in many environments, I have been punished by pages that take 100 times as long as they should to download. This wastes everyone's time and resources. No matter how cheap storage, backup, and bandwidth become, they are not free. Nor is the extra time required to download these products.

The computer companies, bullied, coerced, threatened, and punished by Microsoft, ship mediocre tools and dare anyone to use anything else. They will not help you if you attempt an unstandard installation. They will not help you if try a different OS. To get support, you stay with what they ship. And to do that, you forego alternatives and become hooked into the Microsoft talons. We have all suffered as those with different ideas have had no place to release them, it is as if the libraries were owned by one publisher. That is wrong in any system, and doubly wrong when that publisher has done their best, as documented in the record, to prevent anyone else from being allowed into the library. The PC may replace the library in some vital ways; do we really want to force all publishers to kowtow to one? That is in the interest of no citizen.

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